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INDIA, PHILIPPINES ANNOUNCE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

India and Philippines upgraded their bilateral relationship to a strategic partnership following high-level talks between the two on Tuesday

EYE ON COUNTERING CHINA'S HEFT IN REGION

The announcement follows high-level talks between PM Narendra Modi and visiting Philippine President Ferdinand R Marcos Jr. At the heart of the deal lies a shared commitment to deepen defence, economic, and digital cooperation set against a backdrop of rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific, particularly with China's growing assertiveness in the South China Sea | P11

WE ARE FRIENDS BY CHOICE, SAYS PM

- The talks resulted in over a dozen key agreements and declarations, including enhanced naval, air, and army-to-army cooperation, and a landmark treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters
- "India and Philippines are friends by choice, partners by destiny. Ours isn't just a friendship of past, it is a promise to the future," Modi said

$3.53 bn

WAS THE BILATERAL TRADE VALUE BETWEEN INDIA, PHILLIPINES IN 2023-24

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

CUMULATIVE RAINFALL (IN CM) AS OF 8.30 AM IN UTTARKASHI DISTRICTS

Station	Aug 4	Aug 5
Barot	0.5	1.8
Bhatwari	3	1
Dunda	1.3	0
Mori	0.2	1.8
Purola	1.5	1.2
Uttarkashi	0.8	2.7

A view of the Dharali market in Uttarkashi right after the flash floods triggered by cloudbursts at Kheer Gad area of Uttarkashi district, Uttarakhand on Tuesday afternoon. On left is a topographical image of the same location to show the disaster site

WIPED OUT

Part of Dharali village in Uttarkashi buried as cloudbursts result in flash floods; four killed, over 50 missing; Army, NDRF roped in

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

THREE devastating cloudbursts within a span of three hours on Tuesday unleashed unprecedented havoc in Uttarakhand's Dharali village in Uttarkashi district, leading to the deaths of at least four persons and more than 50 others reportedly missing.

Rapidly flowing water and debris swept through the Himalayan village on way to Gangotri after the cloudbursts resulted in flashfloods that barrelled through homes, trees and cars, trapping scores of people.

Officials said flash floods in the Kheerganga river led to the village being literally washed away. Local villagers fear the actual number of fatalities could be significantly higher.

Dharali is the main stopover on way to Gangotri, the origin of the Ganges, and home to many hotels, restaurants and home stays. At least half the village was buried under slush, rubble and water, officials said even as rescue personnel battled the elements in the ecologically fragile heights to contain the damage of the afternoon. Eyewitnesses described horrific scenes as a deluge of water and mud surged towards the village around 1.45 pm. Contiguous buildings, including three and four-storey houses, fell like a pack of cards as the surging waters washed over them. "Everything is finished," a voice is heard in a video of the cloudburst that went viral.

The devastation was not confined to Dharali alone. A second cloudburst struck in the evening right in front of the Harshil Army camp, causing extensive damage. A third cloudburst occurred at Sukhi Top, leading to the formation of a temporary lake near the Army camp. This new water body poses a significant threat to towns situated along the Bhagirathi river. The Sukhi Top incident resulted in closure of the road to Harsil.

Jai Prakash Singh Pawar, district disaster management officer for Uttarkashi, told this paper, "We received information about extreme rainfall from a person at 1.45 pm. Immediately, the Army, police, and SDRF were deployed for relief operations." The flash floods came in the wake of cloudbursts somewhere in the catchment area of the Kheer Ganga river, an official said.

District Magistrate Prashant Arya acknowledged a possibility of a rise in the toll.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, who was in Andhra Pradesh and rushed to Dehradun, said he has directed officials to conduct rescue operations on a war footing.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended his condolences. Home minister Amit Shah said three ITBP teams and four NDRF teams have been dispatched to help the Army in rescue operations. P12

Uttarkashi vulnerable to flash floods: IIT paper

Jammu: The Indian Himalayas are vulnerable to extreme weather events, including cloudbursts, extreme precipitation, flash floods, and avalanches. Occurrence of extreme weather events is frequent for locations at elevation of 1,000-2,000 metres, according to a 2023 paper at IIT Jammu. Uttarkashi lies at an altitude of 1,160 metres

DON DOUBLES DOWN

Substantially high tariff in 24 hrs: Trump

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

A day after India launched a blistering counterattack on the repeated targeting by Washington for its trade ties with Moscow, US President Trump on Tuesday doubled down on his threat to raise tariffs on Indian goods "very substantially" in the next 24 hours.

Last week, Trump had announced a 25% tariff on Indian goods plus an unspecified penalty tied to India's trade with Russia. This, he said, would go up because India was not listening to his advice to stop buying oil from Russia. India has categorically clarified that it will, like any major economy, take all necessary measures to safeguard its national interests and economic security.

"India has not been a good trading partner... so we settled on 25%, but I think I'm going to raise that very substantially over the next 24 hours, because they're buying Russian oil, they're fuelling the war machine," Trump said in an interview on Tuesday.

Trump also said that he will introduce a small tariff on pharma products and gradually raise it to 250%. Currently, pharma has been kept out of the purview of Trump's reciprocal tariff. The US is the largest buyer of Indian pharma goods with $13 billion exports to the country, accounting for 54% of India's total pharma exports.

They (India) will give us zero tariffs... But that's not good enough, because of what they're doing with oil, not good

Donald Trump

The Indian government has not officially reacted to Trump's latest remarks. On Monday, soon after Trump's announcement, the Ministry of External Affairs put out a strongly worded statement calling out the double standards of the US, which imports goods worth billions of dollars from Russia.

Clearly, India is in no mood to spoil its strategic relations with Russia. National Security Adviser Ajit Doval is set to travel to Russia this week to press for faster delivery of the remaining S-400 air defence systems and review new defence procurements.

RESTORATION

SC set to hear J&K statehood plea on Friday

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear on August 8 a plea seeking directions to the Centre for restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir in a time-bound manner.

The petition was filed last year by college teacher Zahoor Ahmed Bhat and activist Khurshaid Ahmad Malik, arguing that the failure to restore the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir violates the idea of federalism. The plea sought restoration of statehood within two months.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for the petitioners, mentioned the matter before a bench of Chief Justice of India B R Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran saying the matter is shown as listed on August 8 and requested the bench that it not be deleted from the day's cause list.

The CJI accepted the request.

On December 11, 2023, the Supreme Court had unanimously upheld the revocation of Article 370, even as it ordered that assembly elections be held in Jammu and Kashmir by September 2024 and its statehood be restored "at the earliest".

The petitioners submitted that despite the court's directions, no steps were taken by the Centre to provide a timeline for restoring statehood. Remaining a Union Territory is causing grave losses to the development of J&K and affecting the democratic rights of people, it added.

A girl waits to board a bus as commuters jostle to enter one of the few BMTC buses plying during the state-wide strike in Bengaluru on Tuesday | KEVIN NASHON

After HC rap, transport staff suspend stir till Aug 7

AKNISREE KARTHIK & INDRA S @ Bengaluru

AFTER the Karnataka High Court rap, the Joint Action Committee (JAC) of Trade Unions of KSRTC, led by AITUC-affiliated KSRTC Staff and Workers' Federation, on Tuesday afternoon temporarily suspended the indefinite strike till August 7. The strike had been called demanding a salary hike for transport staff and settlement of their salary arrears for the last 38 months.

While the impact of the strike was limited in Bengaluru, passengers in other districts were severely affected. Nearly 50% of Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), North Western Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) and Kalyana-Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (KKRTC) bus services were affected by the strike.

Respective district administrations and regional transport offices arranged private vehicles across the state. Security was beefed up at major bus stands. No untoward incidents were reported across the state, except stone throwing on KSRTC buses at Hubballi and Kolar. Two masked men on a motorbike followed a KSRTC bus, which was heading from Hubballi to Hosapete with nearly 25 passengers, and threw stones at it.

As Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) bus services were disrupted during the first half of the day, autos allegedly fleeced customers. People who couldn't miss their hospital visits and check-ups said they had to pay through their nose for the ride. Some office-goers said they took the Metro, while Bengaluru saw increased traffic during peak hours as many took out their vehicles.

Those heading to the Kempegowda International Airport said the fares of taxis were higher than normal.

MORE REPORTS, PICS ON P4,P7

RS HEAD CITES JAKHAR, RULES OUT SIR DEBATE

PARVEZ SULTAN @ New Delhi

RAJYA Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh on Tuesday cited a 1988 ruling of the then Lok Sabha Speaker Balram Jakhar to rule out a debate on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar, in the House.

"You know that I cannot comment upon the actions and decisions of the EC, which is an autonomous body. Never before I have done it nor I will do it now. Until and unless you change the Constitution and bring the EC under your purview, we cannot comment on EC actions. I am only concerned that the EC is an autonomous body and its decision cannot be discussed here," Harivansh quoted Jakhar as having said in the Lok Sabha.

He went on to reject 34 notices submitted by Opposition MPs, most of them seeking suspension of business under Rule 267 to immediately take up SIR. Harivansh cited procedural lapses in the notices, including incorrect formatting, sub judice status of the matter, and lack of precedence.

"Regrettably some members are using Rule 267 in an apparently casual manner. When the notices are disallowed, the House is disrupted. Our previous chairmen were of the considered opinion that Rule 267 was applicable for raising rarest of rare cases and never on matters of routine nature," Harivansh said.

Under Rule 267, not a single notice was admitted between 2000 and 2004, only four between 2004 and 2009, one out of 491 during 2009–14, and just six out of 3,152 notices from 2014 to the Budget Session of 2025.

EXPRESS READ

Lalbagh flower show kicks off from tomorrow

Bengaluru: The 12-day Independence Day Flower Show at Lalbagh, to be held from Thursday, will be themed around the Kittur kingdom, celebrating the legacy of Kittur Rani Chennamma and Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna | P2

Lawyer claims 3 human remains found on Aug 4

Mangaluru: Even as the SIT did not find any human remains in Dharmasthala on Tuesday, Manjunath N, legal counsel for Sujatha Bhat, mother of missing student Ananya Bhat, claimed that "three human remains were discovered on Monday" | P4

RGUHS plans anti-suicide device in hostel ceiling fans

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

FOLLOWING a spate of suicides, particularly by hanging, the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS), which is the governing body for medical colleges in the state, has decided to introduce 'anti-suicide' devices on ceiling fans in hostels of all medical institutes under its jurisdiction.

The decision comes after two students hanged themselves in their hostel rooms at the Mandya Institute of Medical Sciences (MIMS) in two weeks.

A team led by Dr Sanjeev from the Curriculum Development Cell (CDC) of RGUHS visited MIMS in the last week of July to assess the situation and discuss preventive measures.

During the meeting, Dr Sanjeev revealed that plans are underway to install safety devices on ceiling fans to prevent such incidents.

Sources said the proposed device is designed to detect abnormal weight on the ceiling fan. If someone attempts to hang themselves, the system triggers an automatic release mechanism that detaches the fan from its ceiling hook.

Additionally, a built-in siren is activated to alert hostel authorities, enabling swift intervention. This dual mechanism is intended not only to prevent fatalities, but also provide critical response time to save lives.

A demonstration of the device was reportedly held at MIMS. During the discussion, some doctors also suggested mounting fans directly to the ceiling wall, instead of using down-rod hooks, so that the entire unit collapses under pressure, thereby preventing hanging attempts, source said.

The urgency behind the initiative stems from two recent suicides.

SUICIDES IN HOSTELS

- Bharat Yatthinamani, a medical student from Koppal district, was found dead in his hostel room in late July
- Nishkala, a final-year BSc nursing student, died by suicide in early August